

***Apis m. Esoteria* 37**

Swarm Queen Management

Stimuli that cause swarming:

Crowded population lots of bees

No room to store honey, lots of food

No room to lay eggs, lots of brood

Time to divide and expand the species

Let the colony Swarm and try to catch them and place the swarm in a nuc.

Without moving the nuc far away the queen might swarm again tomorrow. She didn't like where she was and wants to move "away"!

Place the nuc at least several hundred yards away.

Sometimes you can luck out, and the queen will settle into a hive in the apiary she left. But don't count on it.

Cut Queen cells and hope to get a replacement

This will not always stop the swarming Queen.

If you put the swarm Queen back in the same hive the new replacement queen will kill her.

Front Gate Trap and move small a swarm to nuc.

This keeps most of the swarming workers in the original colony. Maintaining the work force will not interrupt honey collection if there is room to store honey in hive or honey super.

Another front gate made of queen excluder wire, will keep the queen inside the colony and allow the worker bees to come and go. You must monitor the hatching queen cells. When the new queen hatches, she will kill the old queen. Hopefully, the virgin queen can get through the gate and go out to mate. Otherwise remove the gate after killing the old queen yourself. This will retain the forager bees that would have followed the swarm queen.

When you see signs of a pending swarm, place the queen excluder gate on the hive. When the queen tries to fly away. She cannot exit the hive, and all the bees will cluster on the front of the hive with the queen inside. Leave the hive closed. In 5 days, the new queens will hatch, and one will kill the old queen.

In 9 more days, the new virgin queen will need to go on her mating flight. So, at 5-7 days after the new queen hatches, remove the gate so the virgin queen can fly out and mate. The old worker bees that needed to swarm will have settled back down and are going in and out through the queen excluder gate.

You have retained the entire work force.

Sometimes the old queen will get slim enough to get through the queen excluder gate.

Using queens with clipped wings is a good way to capture swarms. The queen leaves the old colony but cannot fly well. She will usually crash in the grass about 10 feet in front of the hive. Just pick up the swarm, rehive it, and move it away from the apiary.

Catching a swarm may work or they may reswarm because the queen did not settle into the new nuc/hive box.

Keep the swarm closed in the nuc until they are settled and the queen is ready to lay eggs. You can use the queen excluder gate to hold her inside while the bees come and go.

The swarm of worker bees want to draw comb immediately. In your new hive place one frame with mixed aged brood (some open cells) so the brood pheromone holds the queen. Place some foundation frames so the bees can draw comb. A bonus would be one food frame (honey and pollen mix) to feed the larvae in the brood frame.

When the bees are working drawing comb and the queen is laying eggs you can add drawn comb frames with or without stored honey, and brood. This will allow the population of the new colony to expand fast and reduce their workload by providing frames already full of honey.

Move these frames from your better colonies. They won't miss them and will draw comb faster than the new colony because there are more bees in your better colony.